



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Two Early Nineteenth Century Mantles

THE carved wood mantles of New England made by MacIntire and workers of his school find their counterpart in Pennsylvania and the southern neighboring states in mantles decorated with composition ornaments glued or nailed on wood. With few exceptions, such as Mt. Pleasant, Woodford, and Whitby Hall, where the mantle is a unit of the carved trim of a room, the carved wood mantle is a rarity; and where we would expect to find an ornamental mantle one with composition decorations is the type almost invariably met with. Such are the two here described and illustrated and they are so distinctly characteristic of Philadelphia craftsmanship that the Museum is particularly pleased to have acquired them.

A mantle similar to one of these is on exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum and the fact that the one in New York bore an inscription and a signature led to the purchase of this, in the hope that when the paint which had been laid on in many coats and many colors was removed it too might be found to be inscribed and signed. Such proved to be the case. The central panel decorated with a sarcophagus on which is perched an American eagle with wings spread and flanked by weeping willows, was carefully scraped and, on the front of the sarcophagus the inscription "Sacred to the Memory of Departed Heroes" came to light, and on the base, "R. Wellford Philadelphia Delit," precisely what appears on the mantle in the Metropolitan. While this does not determine the maker of the mantle and others resembling it, it does, without question of doubt, tell us that the composition ornaments on these mantles were made by Wellford. And in the Philadelphia directories from 1801 to 1839 the name of Robert Wellford, "ornamental composition manufacturer," occurs; he moved at various times, probably with the growth of his trade, and his last reported business address, about 1836, is 145 South Tenth Street. He doubtless retired about this time, for in the directory of 1839 he appears as Robert Wellford, Gentleman, 12 Perry Street. No later record than this is known of him nor has any will or administration of his estate been discovered from which it is assumed that he moved from Philadelphia and died elsewhere. It is almost impossible to determine whether he made the actual woodwork of the mantle or no; probably not, though the evidence is but negative, since he never advertised mantles or any sort of woodwork, nor are the two crafts so closely related as to permit us to believe he practiced them interchangeably.

Knowing the inscription, the mantle practically dates itself; it was made in the years following the war of 1812, and the whole tone of the central panel, while not exactly a cheerful decoration, reflects



FIG. 1



FIG. 2

the somber national pride in the outcome of the war and the respect for those who lost their lives in it. For the rest the mantle is fittingly dignified in design; the light Corinthian columns on either side support each an entablature with a small vase of flowers in the frieze, and cornice and moulding ornamented with motifs of acanthus leaves and drapery. This same motif is continued on the moulding and cornice of the central portion which is undecorated except for the panel with the sarcophagus and two simple applied floral decorations on either side.

The second mantle (Figure 2) is much the same in character; it is perhaps more restrained and certainly more satisfactory for interior decoration. It is needless to point out that the ancestors of the central classic design are the similar composition ornaments originally brought into favor by the Adam brothers. The small drapery motif that we find on the first mantle occurs again on this. It was apparently made from the same mould which leads us to affirm that the composition ornaments for both were made by Wellford.

Parton's Philadelphia Annual Advertiser.



R. WELLFORD'S
ORIGINAL
PHILADELPHIA MANUFACTORY
OF
Composition Ornaments &c.
No. 145, south Tenth Street (below Locust).

R. W. has established this manufactory at great expense, and, anxious to please, is continually adding new patterns to his superior collection; he embraces this opportunity of tendering his thanks to his numerous friends for past favours, and pledges himself to use his utmost endeavours to merit a continuance. He has always on hand an extensive assortment of Ornaments suitable for the decoration of the inside of public or private buildings, answering effectually the general intention of wood carving. Warranted to stand if properly fixed.

Store Patterns, and Models generally.

For iron founders, made and ornamented in the most modern style; ships' cabins, old mantle-pieces, &c. fancifully decorated.

Ornamental Roses,

Suitable for ceilings of rooms or entries, of various sizes and patterns, warranted durable, may be readily fixed by screwing them up to the joists, which prevents making dirt in finished buildings, by using those recommended. Specimens may be seen at the manufactory.

Orders for exportation executed with neatness and despatch.—A generous allowance made to wholesale purchasers.—Printed directions will be given for tempering and fixing the ornaments.

We reproduce an advertisement from the Philadelphia Directory for 1807, which shows the range of work which was turned out at Wellford's shop.

The occurrence of similar decorations on a large number of mantles in the neighborhood of Philadelphia as well as on doorways and on other architectural details might lead us to suspect that they all have their origin in Wellford's shop, were it not that in 1807 Wellford terms his business "the original American composition ornament manufactory," a statement which seems to point to competitors in the field. Then too, even with the comparative ease by which these ornaments are made—a paste of plaster, resin, and size, squeezed into metal, pottery of boxwood moulds—it is to be doubted that one manufacturer could have produced so much material of such varied design as is still in existence.